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January 10, 2011

### BY HAND DELIVERY

Mr. Christopher Hughey Acting General Counsel Federal Election Commission 999 E Street, NW Washington, DC 20463

Re: Matter Under Review 6417

Dear Mr. Hughey:

We write on behalf of our clients Jim Huffman for Senate (the "Committee"), Lisa Lisker, as Tresnurer, James Huffman, and Leslie Spencer, in response to the complaint filed in the above-captioned matter under review. The complaint alleges that James Huffman, as a candidate for United States Senate, did not have sufficient finds to make the personal losse to his campaign that were reported by the Committee.

Mr. Huffman and his wife, Leslie Spencer, intended those loans to be made by Mr. Huffman. Based on their misunderstanding of the Commission's somewhat arcane and counter-intuitive rules for the use of marital property, however, several of the loans technically should have been attributed to Ms. Spencer. The Committee is amending its FEC disclosure reports to show the loans as having been made by Ms. Spencer, and Mr. Huffman Is now Hquidating personal funds in order to enable the Committee to refund the loans to Ms. Spencer.

In light of the camplete absence of any intent to violate the Commission's rules, and the peculiarity of the rules applicable to marital property, the Commission should exercise its discretion to dismiss the complaint with no further action.

#### I. Factual Background

On March 3, 2010, James L. Huffman fikel a Stationers of Candidator with the FEC for the affice of United States States from Oregon. Deci. of Lances L. Huffman ¶ 2 (Exh. 1). On the same day, the Committee filed its Statement of Organization with the FEC, naming Todd R.

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 2

Stucky as Treasurer. The Committee amended its Statement of Organization on March 22, 2010, replacing Mr. Stucky with Lisa Lisker. This was Mr. Huffman's first candidacy for faderal office. Mr. Huffman was definated in the November 2, 2010, general election. See M. ¶ 3-5.

As part of his fundraising efforts, Mr. Huffman understood that a candidate is permitted to make personal loans to his campaign Committee, and he sought to do so beginning in February 2010. See id. ¶ 6.

# A. Loan history

Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer estimated Mr. Huffman's net worth, exclusive of Ms. Spencer's share of jointly-held property, to be approximately \$2.3 million. See id. ¶7; Decl. of Leslie Spensar ¶5 (Exh. 2). This number was subculated by taking an informal inventory of the value of the couple's jointly owned homes in Oregan and Montana, a parcel of land in Montana, Mr. Huffman's TIAA-CREF retirement account, and stock owned by Mr. Huffman. See Huffman Decl. ¶7; Spencer Decl. ¶5. At the time the loans described below were made to the Committee, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer's understanding of the FEC's rules related to personal loans was that the total amount of Mr. Huffman's loans could not exceed their \$2.3 million estimate of Mr. Huffman's share of jointly owned property. See Huffman Decl. ¶6; Spenser Duci. ¶4. The couple propertied based on that undermanning.

Lean 1: On February 25, 2010, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spancer transferred \$50,000 from a pre-existing home equity line of aredit account at Bank of the West in Portland, Oregon, to a joint checking account at the same institution. See Huffman Decl. ¶11; see also Exh. 4. The home equity line of credit was established on January 13, 2003, and was secured by the couple's jointly owned primary home in Oregon. See Huffman Decl. ¶8; Spencer Decl. ¶6. Also on February 25, a check was written from the joint checking account for \$50,000, made payable to Jim Huffman for Senate and deposited into the campaign account. See Huffman Decl. ¶11; see also Exh. 4. Mr. Huffman intended this payareant to be a personal loan to the Committee. Huffman Decl. ¶12.

Loan 2: In Murch 2010, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer discussed the possibility of making additional personal loans from Mr. Huffman to the Committee. The couple evaluated their existing assets and decided to use funds from a trust account at Fiduciary Trust Company International ("FTCI"). See Huffman Decl. ¶ 9; Spencer Decl. ¶ 7. Even though this account is in Ms. Spencer's name alone, the couple had a long history of treating the funds in this account

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Mr. Huffman's only price candidacy for any office was an unsuccessful bid for the Mootana Constitutional Convention in 1971. For that 1971 campaign, Mr. Huffman did not have a campaign committee or staff and his campaign consisted of door-to-door solicitations. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 4.

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 3

as joint funds for family use. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 10; Spencer Decl. ¶ 8. Records indicate multiple transfers in the past several years from FTCI to the souple's joint checking account at Bank of the West. See Exh. 5. These funds were used for family geojacts, such as home renovations, car purchases, and family travel. Spencer Decl. ¶ 8.

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On March 15, 2010, \$50,000 was wired from FTCI to the couple's joint account at Bank of the West. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. Because FTCI had an existing secure transfer history with the couple's joint checking account at Bank of the West, it was most efficient to transfer funds from cash-on-hand at FTCI to the joint Bank of the West account. Speniar Deci. ¶ 7. Having funds is the joint account also provided maximum flexibility to make a personal loan to the Committee, in the amount and at the time that was most appropriate. Sure id. On March 24, 2010, a chank was written for \$50,000, made payable to Jim Huffman for Senate, and sent in a regularly scheduled delivery to Ms. Linker at Transmar. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. Mr. Huffman intended this payment to be a personal loan to the Committee, and considered it within the total amount estimated to be his share of jointly owned assets. Huffman Decl. ¶ 12.

Louis 3: On April 8, 2010, \$150,000 was wired from FTCI to the Bank of the West joint accurant. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. On March 31, a check was written for \$150,000, made payable to Jim Huffman for Senate, and sent in a regularly scheduled delivery to Ms. Lisker. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. Mr. Huffman intended this payment to be a personal loan to the Committee, and considered it within the total amount estimated to be his share of jointly owned assets. Huffman Decl. ¶ 12.

Loan 4: On July 1, 2010, \$250,000 was wired from FTCI to the Bank of the West joint account. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. On June 30, a check was written for \$200,000, made payable to Am Huffman for Senate and sent in a regularly scheduled delivery to Ms. Lisker. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. Mr. Huffman intended this payment to be a personal loan to the Committee, and considered it within the total amount estimated to be his share of jointly owned serets. Huffman Decl. ¶ 12.

Ligan 5: On August 25, 2010, Ms. Spancer obtained a \$600,000 line of oradist at FTCI, secured against the assets in the FTCI trust account. See Exh. 6. On September 13, \$500,000 was wired from the FTCI line of credit to the Bank of the West joint account. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4. On September 14, \$500,000 was wired to the Jim Huffman for Senate campaign account at Wachovia Bank NA of Virginia. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 11; see also Exh. 4, 7. Mr. Huffman intended this payment to be a personal loan to the Committee, and considered it within the total amount estimated to be his share of jointly owned assets. Huffman Decl. ¶ 12.

Loan 6: On Outsher 4, 2010, Ms. Spensor increased the FTCI line of seeding to \$900,000. See Buh. 8. On October 13, \$400,000 was wined directly from the FTCI line of credit to the Jim Huffman for Smale account at Wachovia Bank. See Huffman Deal, ¶ 11: see also

# COVINGTON & BURLING LE

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 4

Exh. 7. The direct transfer to the Committee account, rather than to the Bank of the West joint account, was made in facilitate the timing of a plumed Committee advertisement. Spancer Decl. ¶ 7. Mr. Huffman intended this payment to be a presonal loan to the Committee, and considered it within the total amount estimated to be his share of jointly owned assets. Huffman Decl. ¶ 12.

Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer did not appreciate the need to focus on whether, for each particular loan, the source of funds was an account owned exclusively by Mr. Huffman or in which he had a sufficient interest to cover the amount of the loan. Rather, in each instance, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer mistakenly focused on making loans from family funds not to exceed what they reasonably believed to be Mr. Huffman's overall passonal net worth.

#### B. Campaign Reports

Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer conveyed to Ms. Lisker that each of the loans discussed above was a personal loan from Mr. Huffman to the Committee. Huffman Decl. ¶ 13; Spencer Decl. ¶ 9; Lisker Decl. ¶ 3. Ms. Lisker explained to Ms. Spencer that personal loans from the candidate can derive from joint assets, but must not exceed the candidate's share of those assets. Spencer Decl. ¶ 9; Lisker Decl. ¶ 4. Ms. Spencer told Ms. Lisker that the total arresumts were within Mr. Huffman's share of the cauple's jointly held assets. Spenser Decl. ¶ 9; Litker Decl. ¶ 9

As noted above, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer had a good faith understanding that the total of these loans were within Mr. Huffman's estimated share of the couple's joint assets. Ms. Lisker was not aware of the nature of the accounts where the funds for these loans originated. Lisker Decl. ¶ 4. Based on her understanding of the rules, Ms. Spencer did not believe the account originating the funds was required to be reported to Ms. Lisker. Spencer Decl. ¶ 9.

Based on her understanding from Mr. Hufflnan and Ms. Speacer that these loans were personal loans from the candidate, Ms. Lister reported those loans to the FEC as personal loans from Mn. Hufflman to the Committee. Lister Dect. ¶ 5.

#### C. Bernedial Measures

On October 27, 2010, Jeff Mapes, a reporter for *The Oregonian*, called Mr. Huffman to discuss issues related to Mr. Huffman's loans to the Committee. Later that day, Mr. Mapes published a blog entry on *The Oregonian*'s website raising questions about the legality of the loans.<sup>2</sup> This was the first that Mr. Huffman or Ms. Spencer became aware of any potential issues with these loans. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 14; Spencer Decl. ¶ 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> http://blog.emgonlive.com/manesonpolitics/2010/10/huffman\_reises\_questions\_by\_lo.html

#### COVINGTON & BURLING LAP

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 5

They immediately alerted Ms. Lisker and made efforts to retain federal election law counsel. Prior to this time, the Committee did not have the branchit of advice from annual with federal election law expertise. Huffman Deck 7'14', Spencer Decl. 7'10. After a review of the various loan transactions and associated FEC reports, the Committee filed its post-general report disclosing that the final five loans had been made by Leslie Spencer. The Committee will be filing amendments to past reports to reflect what was disclosed in the post-general report. Mr. Huffman also sought to finance a personal contribution to the Committee, this time using only assets he owned outright, or his share of particular jointly owned assets, to enable the Committee to make a refund to Ms. Spencer.

After consultation with counsel and Ms. Lisker as Treasurer, on December 1, 2010, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer obtained two home equity lines of credit from Franklin Templeton Bank & Trust in Salt Lake City, Utah. See Exh. 9; Exh. 10. The first line of credit was secured against the couple's jointly owned property in Oregon, which was professionally appraised at \$1,000,000. See Exh. 11. The second line of credit was secured against the couple's jointly owned property in Montana, which was professionally appraised at \$860,000. See Exh. 12. The total equity in these homes is \$1,674,541.21. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 15. Therefore, Mr. Huffman's interest in the value of these preperties is \$837,270.61. The value of Mr. Huffman's personnal stock holdings is \$81,340.57, and his TIAA-CREF retigment fund is worth \$879,715,51. See Huffman Ducl. ¶ 16; Exh. 13, 14.

Mr. Huffman is making a \$967,270.61 contribution to Jim Huffman for Senate with the purpose of allowing the Committee to refund loans derived from the FTCI account. See Huffman Decl. ¶ 17. This contribution is comprised of \$787,270.61<sup>6</sup> from Mr. Huffman's interest in the value of the couple's two homes, \$80,000 from the sale of Mr. Huffman's stock, and \$100,000 from his TIAA-CREF account. Id. Using the funds from Mr. Huffman's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The current debt owed on the Oregon home includes the \$50,000 drawn from a home equity line for Loan 1. This \$50,000 was not considered when calculating the total equity shown here, in order to present a clear picture of how much Mr. Huffman's share was to make all loans to the committee, including Loan 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Value as sold on December 17, 2019, less communion on sale.

The difference between the couple's informal estimate of Mr. Hufiman's assets and the final numbers is due to a good faith belief that the real market value of their joint homes was significantly higher than what they have since been appraised for. In addition, the couple did not understand that the parcel of land in Montana that Mr. Huffman purchased could not be considered part of his total assets because he had placed the land in Ms. Spencer's name after they ware married.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Because \$50,900 had already been leaned to the contamitate against the Oregan leane, \$787,270.61 was still available for this contribution.

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 6

contribution, as well as cash-on-hand in the Committee's bank account, the Committee will refund \$1 million to Ms. Spenser. Id Effects are in process to obtain additional funds from Ms. Huffman's assets, and Mr. Huffman expects to be able to finance a full refund to Ms. Spenser by May when additional retirement funds should become available to him. Id.

# II. Analysis

Mr. Huffram and Ms. Spencer intended that each of the loans made to the Committee be personal loans from the candidate. Based on accurate advice from Ms. Lisker, the couple understood that a candidate's personal hums to the Committee from joint assets could not enced the candidate's share of these assets. The caught operated under a good faith belief that as long as Mr. Huffirmn's personal loans did not exceedible total share in the couple's joint assets, the personal loans were permissible regardless of the specific origin of the funds.

Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer had an incomplete understanding of the relatively complex regulations related to the source of assets backing personal loans to an authorized committee. The decisions that were made with respect to the source of loans were based solely on convenience and flexibility. At no point did any of the Respondents have a motive or an intent to violate FEC negativities, as demonstrated below.

A. Ms. Spencer understood that her contributions to the Committee were limited

Ms. Spencer understood that her individual contributions to the Committee were limited to \$2400 per election. On March 31, 2010, she wrote a \$4,800 check to the Committee, which comprised a \$2,400 contribution to the 2010 primary election, and a \$2,400 contribution to the general election. Spencer Decl. ¶ 3. FEC reports reflect that the Committee received these contributions on March 31, 2010. See Exh. 15. At the time of the remaining transactions from the couple's accounts, she had a good faith belief that the payments were personal loans from Mr. Huffman. At no point did Ms. Spencer intend to make individual centributions to the Committee buyeard the allowable limit.

B. Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spansor acted numerat to a good faith belief that these loans were permissible personal loans from Mr. Huffman

The decision by Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer to use funds derived from the FTCI account rather than Mr. Huffman's individual or joint assets was primarily a pragmatic decision. Operating under the belief that a personal loan within the total amount of Mr. Muffman's share of assets was permissible regardless of the specific asserce of the loan, the couple locked for the most convenient and accessible source of funds. As discussed in more detail below, the couple had a long practice of transferring funds from FTCI to their joint ascount at Bank of the West for use in family projects and activities. Researce of this secure transfer history between the two accounts, physician from FTCI—citar from each on hand or from a line of credit—was quicker and most convenient than chaminity learns occurred by jointly evened real upperty.

#### COVINGTON & BURLING LEP

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 7

The couple did not realize at the time that the specific source of the funds had an impact on the permissibility of the haus.

C. Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer have a history of treating the FTCI trust funds as joint funds

In addition to the practical reasons for using funds derived from FTCI rather than jointly owned real property, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer have an established practice of using FTCI funds for family projects. The couple considers the funds in the trust account as funds available for facir joint or individual use, and have never made distinctions in its use beard on the ownership details. Since they have been survind, Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spenser have transferred funds from FTCI to their joint enecking assount at Bank of the West on numerous occasions to use far family purposes, such as home renovations, car purchases, and family travel. The couple also uses the FTCI account to pay federal and state taxes from their joint returns, as well as to deposit joint tax refunds. The couple does not treat the money in this account any differently than money in their joint accounts.

Mrs. Spenner is the income beneficiary to a separate trust account at FTCI. This trust regularly deposits funds in the estable's joint characting account at Bank of the West. While these funds are not involved in the current matter, and no loans to the Committee were derived from these funds, the regular transfer of trust funds to the joint checking account damonstrates the couple's longstanding practice of treating trust funds as joint funds.

This long-held understanding of the joint use of the funds in the FTCI account is an additional reason that Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer did not believe that the use of these funds rather than others that were in fact available to Mr. Huffman—would be distinguished under FEC regulations. The couple understood that only Ms. Spencer had access to the FTCI account, and did not consider these funds when estimating Mr. Huffman's net worth, but believed that they could both use the funds as they had many times in the pust. Based on their understanding of the personal lean rules, the excepte's sole forms was on ensuring that the use of funds did not exceed their entiresse of Mr. Huffman's total agent, including his share of joint asness, without regard to the source of funds.

#### D. Respondents have taken appropriate remedial steps

On its post-general report to the NEC, the Committee disclosed that the final five losss were made by Lealis Species. In addition, Mr. Huffman is contributing sufficient funds to the Committee to enable an initial, substantial refund to Ms. Spencer, and he currently expects to be able to finance a full ratherd by Msy. The Committees should give appurpriate weight to Respondents' efforts to take timely remedial action.

Moseaver, Respondents respectfully urge the Commission to take into account the fact that Mr. Huffman and Ms. Spencer were new to the political process and were attempting to

#### COVINGTON & BURLING LLP

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 8

comprehend the joint asset rules without the benefit of election law counsel. The Commission's rules governing the use of married property by a federal commission are examiner-intuitive at least, especially in circumstances such as those where a married couple as a practical matter treats the spouse's assets as common property in all aspects of their lives.

In the circumstances presented here, the Commission should exercise its discretion to close this matter under review without further action.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Enclosures

There is a serious question as to whether, in the circumstances presented here, restrictions on the use of a married couple's assets for contributions to an authorized committee are constitutional, given that there is no reasonable argument that the spouse's contributions could be corrupting. While the Supreme Court in Buckley v. Valeo, 424 U.S. 1 (1976), upheld contribution limits for family members, the Court noted that the risk of corruption was "somewill diminished" in connection with a family member's contribution. Id. at 53 n.59. The risk of corruption is essentially seem in the circumstances passented here, winest the spoused contribution is derived from funds mutically shared by the candidate and his spouse. Respondents reserve the right to object to the complaint on constitutional grounds, but respectfully sabult that the complaint should be dismissed on productional grounds, regardless of the constitutional merits.

# COVINGTON & BURLING LLP

Mr. Christopher Hughey January 10, 2011 Page 9

cc: ·

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